

# CONTROL OF MENTAL DISEASE

## The Functions of Experts and Poor Law

By the Reverend J. C. PRINGLE

(Secretary of the Charity Organization Society)

SO much has been said and written about the *Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee*\* that a writer who wishes to add anything to the discussion must say bluntly, "Yes, but I want to say something, too: do let me do so!" The present writer desires in particular to shout out something very loud to his fellow members in the *Eugenics Society*. It is from the point of view of the practical social worker—extremely practical—immersed in it every day and all day, and with lamentably little time to acquire even a reasonable academic equipment—that he craves their attention.

Remembering the tradition of the *Eugenics Society* and the master-thought of its existence, what is its rôle in the crisis—for it is a crisis—produced by the appearance of this *Report* and its not too badly founded statement that we are breeding to-day twice as many mental deficientes as we were less than a generation ago? The importance of this question lies in the fewness of the groups on this island who necessarily take any serious notice of the incident at all.

There is an important body, the Central Association for Mental Welfare, with its quarterly publication and its annual conference, which, being at least technically a voluntary body, can write to the Press and carry on propaganda if so minded. It is, however, rightly and naturally dominated by representatives of local authorities, and, still more, by the question of what it is that local authorities, taken as a whole, ought to do. The C.A.M.W. has resolved to utilize such energy, and such articulateness as it possesses in a particular direction, viz.,

by all and any means to secure that local authorities shall provide *more beds* for mental deficientes, and that every kind of pressure shall be brought to bear upon those local authorities who are backward in this matter. Having so decided, the C.A.M.W. is particularly concerned to tell all persons with red herrings to *keep off*. In a practical world they feel that it is right even to suppress lines of thought and inquiry which might conceivably give a conceivable member of a conceivable local authority a chance of moving for delay in building the suggested new institution till the said line of inquiry had been somewhat further pursued. With the officials of local authorities who are members of the C.A.M.W., with the Board of Control whose duty it is to put pressure upon the local authorities, this is a matter of immediate urgency, of getting certain spending resolutions through finance committees, and of riding off individual obstructionists but too well known to them.

The function of the *Eugenics Society*, as I conceive it, is an utterly different one. It has expressed its sympathy with the C.A.M.W. in its struggles, and may well abstain from expressing any doubts about all these bricks and mortar, but it should surely then proceed to the activity its own tradition demands of it, the formation of opinion. The *Society* exists first of all to think in a clear, consistent, and informed manner, and secondly, to disseminate these thoughts. An example may serve to indicate the sort of divergence there must inevitably be between us and the C.A.M.W. At that Association's last Annual Conference but one, Mrs. Hume Pinsent, speaking from the platform on behalf of the Board of Control, deprecated the advocacy of sterili-

\* It is assumed that the reader has read Mr. Eldon Moore's article on the *Report* which appeared in the last issue of this REVIEW.

zation (a *possible* rival of extended institutional accommodation) on the grounds that it must inevitably result in a great increase in venereal disease, since men would know that these sterilized women ran no risk of offspring. From the point of view of Mrs. Pinsent's campaign for more beds to make possible more segregation it was "a hit, a hit, a palpable hit," but as a piece of clear, consistent, informed thinking, it is perhaps hardly so brilliant. The threat of a greater incidence of venereal disease is always a first-class method of driving reasoning out of court by substituting terror. When reason is allowed to skulk back on to the field, it observes that the kind of man who, being infected with venereal disease, gratifies himself at the expense of a mentally deficient woman, is not the kind of man who troubles much about her having offspring. The instances which might occur—everything is possible—are reasons, we submit, for greater efficiency in the campaign for the elimination of venereal disease, not for 'bulldosing' the people who ought to be thinking clearly, consistently, and informedly, about sterilization.

An American writer in a fine peroration to a volume on social services lately asked whether there was any prospect of man laying aside his secular mysticism and applying his intelligence to the elimination of eliminable hindrances to the progress of human society. M. Tarde, at least, would retort by arguing that man is not so much an incorrigible mystic as an incorrigible mimic, and that not because he enjoys the labour of imitation, but because he fears to be detected doing or being something different from his neighbours. So immense a change has come over the habits of the Western peoples in the matter of offspring that even crude explanations are not out of court. During a visit to the Continent only a month ago I was informed by first-class authorities, speaking of Germany and Scandinavia, that birth control had now spread to *all* classes. It was long since adopted by the peasantry of France.

May it not fairly be suggested that a contributory factor was a change of attitude

among the leaders of society and its progressive imitation by the other social grades? While the leaders took a mystical view (that still taken by the Roman Catholic Church and by the Japanese, to mention two educated groups), the people followed them. The leaders gradually became rationalist on this question, and the people are following them—at different speeds, the British always well behind—but following (I can support this from among my own wage-earning acquaintance).

### THE VALUE OF PROPAGANDA

I do not mean that the bulk of individual couples are figuring out the wisdom or unwisdom of large families. I think they are doing what they see their 'betters' do. I am hopeful even about the least cultured grade. Among them there is a ferocious tyranny of the street. If a woman diverges from their code, they mete out punishment which is usually corporal. When the time comes that large families are barred by that code, large families will not happen. Nor is this only a question of imitation. It is also one of propaganda. A tuberculous man, subsisting at the public expense, a decent fellow, claimed the other day that as he was unable to serve his country by earning wages, he had done what little he could by begetting six children—an obvious result of propaganda. We are not under any illusion as to the proportionate part which reason, or knowledge either, will play in human affairs. We apprehend that it is likely to be very small.

What we are out for is first to make it as good as we can, and then as large as we can. We want to persuade everybody in any class who dares to think for himself, to think hard how he, and we all, can secure on this island a better race. And we have hopes that the imitative mass, in all classes, will slowly but surely follow them. We doubt whether many people will abstain from mating because there is doubt as to the soundness of their progeny. We doubt if they would be wise to do so. We want to help them in every possible way to exercise choice as to whether their mating results in

any progeny, and if in any, in what number. We are tempted to hope that a *fashion* can be set up of exercising this choice with a full sense of responsibility, and that this exercise of choice may spread through the community.

We foresee a day when it may require far more courage for a mentally deficient, tubercular, or syphilitic waterside labourer and his mate to bring progeny into the world than for a similarly afflicted pair of millionaires; for the simple reason that once the code of the waterside goes against such reproduction, as the code of the educated, so far as they have or obey any, went against it generations ago, it will be very largely obeyed.

### VOLUNTARY EUGENICS

A friend of mine who has now attained eminence in the medical profession, was brought up in a remote village of South-Western Ireland. He assures me that the code of the village was a system of voluntary eugenics. The young people selected their mates, but none would have dared in choosing to disregard aptitude for the production of healthy offspring. I venture to envisage as the goal of the *Eugenics Society* not an army of officials, lay and medical, inveigling certain types into mental and general hospitals and there sterilizing them by the latest methods; but a population making the choice for or against parentage, on grounds, so far as may be, supplied by this *Society*, and putting that choice into effect with all the assistance available, whether medical or surgical.

Bricks and mortar are, with us, clearly a side issue. Like the man who bet he could eat a calf, I must leave "These 'ere veal pasties and start on that there calf"—in this case the *Mental Deficiency Report*. Before doing so, the point can perhaps be best elucidated by a reference to the works of the late M. Emile Zola.

The exercise of choice in regard to parenthood would of course be an economic revolution on an infinitely vaster scale than it would be a revolution in regard to mental

deficiency. It would bring into industry, on co-operative lines, the advance in welfare which the great Turkish sultans accomplished by the method of janissaries—the selective collection of the amount of rising generation you require for a particular purpose. Zola believed that what really irked the French workman was that he could not give full rein to the procreative instinct while the capitalist could. By means of his own particular brand of socialism, Zola promised the removal of this embargo (cf. *Travail*).

We do not believe M. Zola can deliver the goods along the lines proposed, but we believe medical science aiding and abetting eugenics propaganda can deliver incomparably better goods, a consciously progressive human community.

### THE SOCIAL CRITERION OF DEFECT

Now, to correlate these crude and simple ideas with the *Report*: Principal Conclusion No. I (Part III, p. 96) is that "the real criterion of mental deficiency is a social one." Here at once is substituted for tests as per schedule by the school medical officer a decision by the neighbours, by those who have to live their life conditioned by an environment very familiar to them, that so-and-so is "no good" in this environment, that his or her offspring will probably be similar, or that the first baby or the first two babies are "no good" and that it is not desirable there should be any more.

The next findings which arrest our attention occur in Section 5 (Part III, p. 99). We are told that the ascertained incidence is twice as high as that ascertained twenty years ago. "The increase is probably due in the main to greater thoroughness and improved methods of ascertainment." They go on (b) to tell us that the incidence is 6.49 per 1,000 in urban and 10.66 in rural areas, and to add (c) that of all adult defectives receiving public assistance, 75 per cent. were being relieved by Poor Law authorities. "These facts alone [i.e., the large proportion of the work being done by Poor Law authorities], in the Committee's

opinion, render essential a modification of the statutory provisions relating to the mentally defective if any continuity and unity of care and control are to be secured . . .” (p. 100).

The Committee sat for two years, but it did not include any officer or member of a Poor Law authority or any person reputed to be acquainted with the operation of the Poor Laws. The Royal Commission on the Feeble Minded, appointed in 1904, whose ascertainment afford the basis of comparison upon which all the findings and proposals of this Committee are founded, included the late Sir Charles Loch, the most distinguished student of Poor Law matters then living in England, and who—it is well known—took a leading part both in the investigations and in drafting the findings of the Royal Commission. This difference of personnel might not be thought worthy of mention, were it not for the corollaries which follow upon it, both in the findings and recommendations of the present Committee.

It is not in the least the intention of this article to call in question the arithmetic of the Committee, but merely to submit one or two minor considerations which could not have escaped notice had a Poor Law worker (as, for example, our Mr. E. J. Lidbetter) been present at their deliberations.

Perhaps the reader will catch the significance of this point best by the use of an analogy. We live in an age of specialized plants. In tendering for a contract to manufacture a particular line of goods—to construct a building, a railway, a harbour, etc.—the competing firms are likely to secure the contract in proportion as they are in possession of these up-to-date specialized plants. This *Report* is a tender to the British public, on the part of a group—in our analogy, “firm”—who believe they are in possession of such a plant, and that, in consequence, they can do the work better than the firm, or group of firms, who have for long been doing it. Quite in the manner of modern business, they not only put forward their qualifications for being given the contract, but they advise (p. 77) the British public to engage their Mr. So-and-So, who

is unquestionably the most up-to-date expert, to take charge of the whole enterprise.

What are they offering to contract to do?—To deal with “that section of the community which we propose to term the ‘social problem’ or ‘subnormal’ group. This group comprises approximately the lowest 10 per cent. in the social scale of most communities.” Their reason for coming forward is that they believe mental subnormality to be the principal differentia of this group. It is quite true that they refer, from time to time, in the *Report*, to this mental subnormality as something known and specific. They say it is largely due to “germinal variation,” although they do not tell us how they discovered this fact. They say elsewhere that it is incurable. But let us for a moment return to their own definition of mental defect. As we saw, “the real criterion of mental deficiency is a social one—an incapacity for independent social adaptation.”

It would appear, therefore, that this sentence (p. 49)—“It would appreciably ease the burden of that other authority (Public Assistance Authority) if machinery were available for the ready transfer to the local M.D. authority of persons whose need for assistance rose from their being mentally defective”—might be read in the other order, viz.—“persons demonstrated to be mentally defective by their need for assistance.” Elsewhere they say, with truth (p. 81), “Low mentality and poor environment form a vicious circle.” The contents of the group in question show, they tell us (p. 80), “a much larger proportion of insane persons, epileptics, paupers, criminals (especially recidivists), unemployables, habitual slum dwellers, prostitutes, inebriates, and other social inefficients, than would a group of families not containing mental defectives.” We can only be grateful to the authors of this *Report* for the candour with which they have told us that they are offering to deal with the dregs of human society—that they believe that these have a common characteristic, and that that characteristic—mental subnormality—is one which

they are specially qualified to deal with, but that, when pressed to explain what they mean by "mental subnormality," they have to fall back upon the fact that the clients in question form the dregs of human society. The special plant is the mental branch of medical science. The technicians are doctors who have specialized in it.

Assuming that they are the best people to deal with this problem, they complain bitterly of two things: (1) that the work has been left for many years to another firm, or group of firms, namely, the Poor Law Guardians; and (2) that, notwithstanding the fact that Parliament passed an Act in 1913, by which it intended to transfer the work from that firm to their firm, the public have so far disregarded Parliament as to transfer only a very small fraction of the work from that firm—the Poor Law Guardians—to the new firm, the mental specialists. It distresses them to think that the public have left this work in the hands of so unsuitable a firm, and they say (p. 47), "The whole Poor Law system is designed for other purposes, and is by its very nature unsuited to the needs of defectives." Again (p. 45), they find that a large number of persons who should have been under their care "were maintained or supported by the Poor Law Guardians." On p. 40 they tell us that "only 5 per cent. of the ascertained defectives are in certified mental deficiency institutions." Yet, "56 per cent. of the whole number of adults ascertained are in receipt of financial support from public funds. Of this group, 54 per cent. are assisted by Poor Law authorities; 25 per cent. are in mental hospitals. Of the 18 per cent. maintained by local M.D. authorities, nearly half are accommodated in institutions provided by Poor Law authorities." Thus, we have a very full and accurate admission of the fact that the other firm, or firms, have unquestionably been doing the work, or trying to do the work, and that the British public have continued to entrust them with it, despite the passing of the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913.

They complain (p. 62) "that the magni-

tude of the mental deficiency problem has been considerably under-estimated in the past." But we submit for the consideration of the Committee that there is a reason for this, and a powerful one. The handling of this section of the population is so difficult, so little understood—arouses so much inevitable resentment and chagrin, and is, in fine, so unpopular—that it has for long been treated as the Cinderella of the efforts of the community. For a number of years past it has been under sentence of abolition, and *in consequence* there has been a systematic and deliberate abstention on the part of the Government to ascertain and set out in arithmetical form what, in point of fact, the authorities entrusted with the work were doing. The inquirer will readily discover that, if he wants to know the numbers of any group that has been dealt with under the Poor Laws, they are not available. Public funds have not been placed at disposal for making such ascertainment, tabulations, and records.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the numbers in this group were under-estimated in the past. For political reasons *no figures were kept* of the work of the bodies who—as this new group admit—were *doing the work*.

It is quite true that this group has been dealt with under the Poor Law because the members of it could not support themselves or adjust themselves, and not especially because they were mentally deficient. It is quite true that progress, even great progress, may be made by saying, "Now we are going to think of these people as mental deficient: we are going to ask a new firm—the mental specialists of the medical profession—to try their hand at this task." If the matter is so decided, eugenists will wish the new firm the best of luck. But we ask readers to be very careful to observe that the essential feature of the persons whom the mental specialists are going to handle is that they are the persons with whom the Poor Law administrators have been struggling for a hundred years, and for whom the Poor Law authorities have built up by far the greatest part of the services now

rendered them, whether in institutions or in their homes.

We know very well that the public will regard mental deficiency as something analogous to tuberculosis or heart disease or arthritis. They will joyfully deliver those held to be suffering from it to the medical profession and think no more about it. They will not know that upon page after page of this candid and painstaking *Report* it is impossible to be sure whether it is pauperism, dependency, maladjustment that is being spoken of, or something analogous to one of the diseases to which we are accustomed in medical classifications.

The new firm are asking to have the contract transferred to them from the old firm, first because they are specialists, and second because it will bring the whole of one problem under one control. That reads all right so long as we are thinking of mental deficiency as one of the diseases. It is by no means so feasible or satisfactory when we find that the chief symptom of suitability for being brought under this one control is, that the individual is generally to be found in the care of the Poor Law or prison authorities!

The case is made out by speaking very slightly of the work of the Poor Law authorities and alleging that they were designed for something quite different. It is easy to slight them, since they had far the most difficult task of any authority on this island, and one in which, by its nature, only a very limited measure of success was or will ever be attained. As for the "argument from design," the contrary is the truth. Boards of Guardians were designed to deal with what the *Report* calls the "social problem group," and during the last one hundred years they have built up a great and in many ways and many places truly wonderful service to do so.

The *Report* complains, as we saw just now, that some of the clients meant by Parliament to come to the M.D. authority have been sent to mental hospitals, but it is careful to demand that the mental hospitals

shall be put under the control of the M.D. authority!

Before we turn to their proposals for carrying out the contract they are so anxious to secure, we would remind our readers that there is another firm in the field for this contract. It is widely held in medical circles that there is a mental factor in most disease and a mental element in all treatment; that it is in consequence undesirable from the point of view of administrative medicine to set up separate authorities or departments of authorities to deal with mental disorder, when, in a few years time, it will become obvious that such departments must be reabsorbed in the general health services under Central Health Committees. It is an example of a common experience, viz., that specialization can accomplish much, but it can be overdone.

### PROPOSALS FOR TREATMENT

The reader is invited to draw a distinction between two aspects of these proposals, viz: those concerning the treatment to be given, and those relating to the persons to give it.

He will find, perhaps to his surprise, that the recommendations of the Committee make almost no alteration in the treatment given to this subnormal group, but a complete, drastic, and revolutionary change in the choice of persons to give it. A new set of people, experts in the treatment of mental deficiency, are to take over duties which have been performed for a hundred years, and are being performed at this moment, by Poor Law officers. As the ukase has gone forth, we have no doubt that this transfer will take place. We are well aware of the advantages of the new broom, and we have already said, several times, how much may conceivably be gained by bringing in a slightly altered angle of approach, consequent upon the greater emphasis upon a possible mental defect, and the stimulation and refreshment of having to cheer one on in a difficult task, the romantic hypothesis of "germinal variation."

We say "romantic hypothesis" not

from any wisdom of our own, but entirely through the guidance afforded to us by the *Report* itself, in its extremely able and interesting Section 92 (pp. 80-81). In this Section there become apparent two things: (1) the age-long character of the group of persons who are "subject to be dealt with," and (2) the very small addition to the knowledge, practical and theoretical, available for dealing with them which is afforded by this hypothesis of mental subnormality. Thus, we are told, "comparatively little has been done to elucidate how it is related to the problems of insanity, epilepsy, pauperism, crime, unemployability, and alcoholism. Which are causes, and which results, in this focal group of social problems, it is impossible to state from the meagre data collected up to the present . . . we have comparatively little reliable data relating to the mental endowments and characteristics of this 'social problem' group." All this is very candid and modest. The reader is asked to observe, however, that, while there is here an honest disclaimer of any great expectation of success on the part of the new firm which is coming forward to undertake this contract, there are apparently quite sufficient data for taking the contract away from the great army of men and women who have given their lives to this branch of service and are engaged upon it to-day. The Section ends with the sentence: "At the same time it is necessary to recognise that this (inherent mental limitation) is not the only consideration, and there are many other social and economic factors involved." We agree; but we are left wondering why the experts on dealing with the social and economic factors, namely, the Poor Law service, have been weighed in the balance and found so completely wanting as the proper persons to deal with the group affected by these factors.

If the *Report* is so candid and careful to describe the group with whom it proposes to wrestle, as that with which the Relieving Officers are at present struggling, what kind of personnel do they propose to enlist in order to render this difficult service in such

a greatly improved manner? These are indicated at various points in Chapter IV (p. 44), headed "Suggested future allocation of responsibility for adult defectives, and recommendations as to the future provision for their care, training, and control." There is to be "unified and expert control . . . concentration in the hands of a single authority, if possible, a single Committee, for the purposes of the Lunacy and Mental Deficiency Acts." Everything will be decided by Medical Superintendents of Mental Hospitals, and the Medical Officers of the local M.D. authority. But (p. 53), "the authority will still fail in their effort if they do not possess on their staff inquiry officers who have been specially trained for the work." "The use of any Poor Law Institution is strongly deprecated, except those which have been specially designed for the purpose" (p. 68).

We have already referred to the specially selected medical expert upon whom the whole undertaking will pivot (p. 77). We learn again (p. 60), that "It is probable that the Local Authority would often make use of the Supervision Officers as guardianship officers, or they might employ some competent social rescue worker to be guardianship officer to certain types of girls, or a good Scoutmaster to undertake the guardianship of the higher grade boys." We will venture, at this point, to offer a hint to the expert mentioned on page 77. It will, of course, be necessary for him to put out in the shop window these new medical officers and this new type of social worker, with their special training; and, no doubt, the C.B.'s and C.B.E.'s will all come their way. But we would advise him to rise a great while before dawn, now, at once, before it is too late, and buy at any figure, inviting them to come on their own terms, a solid phalanx of stalwart Relieving Officers, male and female, who have grown grey and tired and sad in handling the group under discussion. If he is not quick about it they will take their pensions and their compensations, and move off to the proximity of the best golf links. By all means let the boy

scouts have the C.B.'s, but let the expert be sure that the Relieving Officers are near at hand, "standing in the shadow keeping watch upon their own."

### FEW NEW SUGGESTIONS

The proposals in the *Report*, for the change of personnel, are complete and definite. We now come to the proposals for treatment. Here we are confronted abruptly with the difference between a subject matter which can be removed to a laboratory, a dissecting room, an operation theatre, or hospital ward of any kind, and handled in accordance with the methods of "modern science," and all human affairs which cannot be so treated. To workers belonging to the world of modern science, terms really correspond to ascertained recognizable objects; in fact, words function more or less as they do in the dictionary.

How different is a word when it emerges from the dictionary, untouched by sorrow and unsoiled by sin, from what it is when it has been at work in the *milieu* of ordinary human life, stained and scarred with tears and curses. This transmigration and transformation of words is amply illustrated in the pages of this *Report*. Thus, we find our very old friends, "supervision," "guardianship," "training," "employment." It is curious that, when the present writer once went upon a deputation to the Board of Control and the word "supervision" cropped up, an eminent member of that Board rapped out with more vigour than courtesy, "What is the good of supervision?"

"Supervision," as a dictionary word, is valueless, we admit. Supervision as carried out by many human agents is a waste of money: that we admit. But when one human being is made responsible for another, and that a wretched and incompetent one, the former may, with a good heart and plenty of courage, achieve something. His achievement will probably bear no relation to "modern science"; in the words of the *Report*, "little will be known about it." It has, in fact, been done on this

island almost entirely by Poor Law Guardians and Poor Law Officers, and the *Report* bears eloquent testimony to the thanks they have got for it.

We cannot help feeling that the assumption made by this Committee, none of whom had Poor Law experience—that the handling of the problem of the dregs of society by the Poor Law Guardians and their officers has simply been one long tragic mistake which could not be expected to achieve any result, and from which nothing can be learnt—has prevented their giving adequate consideration to the great questions of contraception and sterilization in relation to the problem.

### STERILIZATION AND "SOCIALISATION"

They start a section (p. 87) on "sterilization, segregation, and socialisation." By the time they get to "concluding remarks" (p. 95) they have dropped sterilization, and merely reiterate that, when their group have taken over the task from the Poor Law authorities, "the burden which mental deficiency imposes upon the nation will not only be lightened, but will be far less costly."

We submit that under the Poor Laws a prodigious amount of toil and thought have been given to the institutional treatment of these unfortunates and their 'socialisation,' and, speaking from the standpoint of that toil, we submit that sterilization should take its place in the equipment not only of the community but of the individual himself and herself, for dealing with the problem. The Committee have set out admirably the difficulty these people have in playing their part as citizens. Quite apart from the question of the supply of socially deficient individuals in the next generation, we submit that one of the largest elements in the whole problem is the tragic failure of these people to keep decent homes and bring up children well. We want to give them a chance of a form of social life not obviously too difficult for them. We ask for adequate discussion of, and instruction about, sterilization, as one of the methods for which we are indebted



to science, to enable us gradually to eliminate from our social fabric the melancholy flaws so eloquently described by the Committee.

The proposed treatment is to consist of "out-door relief, supervision, guardianship, training and occupation." All of these are qualified in the *Report* by the adjective "proper." The present writer has observed during a quarter of a century that when the word "proper" occurs in a document, it has a definite and invariable connotation. It means that 'the writer is not acquainted personally with the processes to which he is referring, but they are suitable ones to mention in this context, if we may rely upon the dictionary significance of the words. It will be the duty of somebody else to apply them successfully to the material in hand.' Obviously, the Mental Deficiency experts are not acquainted with these operations. They say themselves that they have done little supervision work since 1913, and almost no guardianship work. The value of their supervision work was dealt with by a member of the Board of Control, whom we have quoted above.

Unlike the Mental Deficiency experts, Poor Law Guardians and officers have been carrying out all these processes for the enormous majority of the persons requiring them; for a hundred years, under present statutes, on this island; they, or their counterparts, for a hundred ages throughout the story of the human race.

(P. 54)—"All possible precautions should be taken to protect those who are left in the community from the risk of relationship with the other sex." We will only comment with D'Artagnan, "That is an order more easy to give than to execute." A Relieving Officer with the power of the purse behind him, an unlimited devotion to his unhappy clients, a magnetic influence over the rela-

tives, has many a time worked wonders with members of the subnormal group; but he has only been able to do so with a "strict" Board of Guardians behind him. Neither the present temper of the British public nor the present attitude of the British politician of all Parties, affords him the slightest support; quite the reverse. In the decades in front of us, the Organizer of the Unemployed will win every time, and the medical expert (p. 77) "will have his work cut out."

When it comes to training and occupation we can be brief. The making of work for persons who cannot find it for themselves in the open market is an old, sad, and ridiculous story. It is also a terrible life for the officers in charge. The attempt to do the same for persons handicapped by ailments of one kind or another, is roughly estimated to cost three times as much as it does to keep them in idleness. With regard to training, it is curious that, put forward as a panacea in the Minority Report of 1909, it should come up smiling in 1929. Between the two dates lies the huge expenditure on training the disabled men after the war, the failure of the vast bulk of which is a by-word. It is perfectly true that the ordinary work of a Relieving Officer and a Poor Law authority, for the subnormal group, is fitly dissected into these five parts, outdoor relief, supervision, guardianship, training, and employment, and it is honest of the Committee to tell us that they have nothing new to suggest except a slightly altered point of view, and an entirely new personnel who will have had the great advantage of attending certain courses of lectures.

We conclude where we began. For our part, we propose to throw our strength into propaganda, for a community consciously choosing throughout its ranks to rear up a selected, and, as we hope, better race.